

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 H-01
INR-10 IO-13 L-03 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05
SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 /078 W
-----014683 301805Z /46

O R 301735Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8942
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USNATO
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 09815

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR, GW
SUBJECT: FRG NON-PAPER IN RESPONSE TO BRITISH 50
PERCENT PROPOSAL

1. IN THE COURSE OF A CALL ON MBFR DIRECTOR DR.
RUECKRIEGEL ON ANOTHER SUBJECT, HE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY
TO PASS TO US IN THE FORM OF A NON-PAPER THE GERMAN
REACTION TO THE BRITISH 50 PERCENT PROPOSAL. THE
COMPLETE TEXT READS AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT: IN THE COURSE OF THE VIENNA
NEGOTIATIONS IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY EVIDENT THAT
THE EAST MIGHT MODIFY ITS NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TO THE
PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVITY IF COLLECTIVITY OR AT LEAST
THE SAME RULES FOR CALCULATING THE COMMON COLLECTIVE
CEILING COULD BE APPLIED TO ALL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS,
I.E. ESPECIALLY TO THE SOVIET UNION.

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ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE OF THE MAIN INTERESTS OF
THE WEST IN MBFR ARE SOVIET REDUCTIONS, AND IN PARTICULAR
THE IMPOSITION OF A LIMIT ON RESIDUAL SOVIET FORCES.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE BRITISH PROPOSAL IS
SEEKING TO COMBINE THE WESTERN INTEREST IN ADEQUATE
SOVIET REDUCTIONS WITH A MECHANISM THAT WOULD NOT

SINGLE OUT THE SOVIET UNION FOR SPECIAL "DISCRIMINATORY" TREATMENT.

AFTER GIVING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE BRITISH PROPOSAL WE HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT SHOULD, FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS, NOT BE FURTHER PURSUED:

-- THE 50 PERCENT RULE, ALTHOUGH THEORETICALLY APPLICABLE TO EACH PARTICIPANT, WOULD IN PRACTICE ONLY FORCE THE SOVIET UNION TO REDUCE, BECAUSE THE SOVIET UNION ALONE HAS TROOPS IN A STRENGTH OF MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING, ENVISAGED AT 700,000 STATIONED IN THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS. THIS FACT WOULD NOT MAKE THE BRITISH PROPOSAL MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE SOVIET UNION THAN THE PRESENT WESTERN SUBCEILING PROPOSAL. ON THE CONTRARY, SINCE AMERICAN FORCES WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE REDUCED AT ALL BECAUSE THEY ARE FAR BELOW THE 50 PERCENT LIMIT, THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT FEEL THAT THE BRITISH PROPOSAL IS IN FACT EVEN MORE DISCRIMINATORY THAN THE PRESENT WESTERN PROPOSAL.

-- SHOULD A DATA BASE BE AGREED UPON WHICH ESTABLISHES A SOVIET STRENGTH BELOW THE PRESENT WESTERN ESTIMATE, THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE BRITISH MODEL WOULD BE THAT SOVIET REDUCTIONS ACCORDING TO THE 50 PERCENT PROPOSAL WOULD BECOME CONSIDERABLY LESS. WITH THE PRESENT
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WESTERN ESTIMATE FOR THE SOVIET GROUND FORCE MANPOWER AT 470,000, THE SOVIET UNION WILL HAVE TO REDUCE 120,000 IN ORDER TO REACH 50 PERCENT OF THE COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING (700,000), I.E. 350,000. IF AN AGREEMENT ON DATA IN VIENNA SHOULD, HOWEVER, ESTABLISH SOVIET GROUND FORCE MANPOWER AT, SAY, 400,000, THEN THE SOVIET UNION WOULD, UNDER THE 50 PERCENT PROPOSAL, HAVE TO REDUCE ONLY 50,000 MEN.

-- SINCE THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE 50 PERCENT PROPOSAL THE WEST WOULD LOOSE THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF SUCH A LIMIT ON US-FORCES, NAMELY THE MORAL OBLIGATION TO LIVE UP TO THE RESIDUAL LEVEL ESTABLISHED FOR US STRENGTH.

-- THE 50 PERCENT CLAUSE, WHILE NOT COMING EVEN NEAR TO AFFECT US FORCES, WOULD AUTOMATICALLY FOCUS ON THE STRENGTH OF GE-FORCES (341,000), THUS PUTTING GERMAN -- INSTEAD OF AMERICAN -- FORCES ON A COMPARABLE LEVEL WITH THE FORCES OF THE SOVIET UNION.

-- ALTHOUGH GE-FORCES WOULD NOT

AUTOMATICALLY COME UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO REDUCE, A
PRACTICAL NATIONAL LIMIT WOULD BE IMPOSED ON THE FORCES

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 09815

OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY ALONE. IN THE EVENT
OF A NECESSITY TO MAKE UP FOR POSSIBLE TEMPORARY
REDUCTIONS OF WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO INCREASE ITS FORCES BY
MORE THAN 9,000 MEN IN ORDER TO MAKE UP FOR A WESTERN
DEFICIENCY.

-- THE BRITISH PROPOSAL MAKES AN AGREEMENT AT LEAST
ABOUT SOVIET GROUND FORCE DATA IMPERATIVE. THIS MIGHT
LEAD TO AN EASTERN DEMAND FOR AN AGREEMENT ON GERMAN
BASIC DATA WHICH ALONE COMES CLOSE TO 50 PERCENT OF
700,000.

-- THE EAST MIGHT DEMAND THAT THE 50 PERCENT PROPOSAL
SHOULD ALSO APPLY TO THE AIR FORCE. SINCE THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC CONTRIBUTES MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF WESTERN
PERSONNEL TO NATO AIR FORCE STRENGTH IN THE NGA, AN
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APPLICATION OF THE 50 PERCENT CLAUSE TO THE AIR FORCE
WOULD LEAD TO AN AUTOMATIC REDUCON COMMITMENT FOR
THE GERMAN CONTINGENT WHICH IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE
WESTERN POSITION.

IN CONCLUSION, THE BRITISH 50 PERCENT PROPOSAL,
WITH ITS ACCENT ON NATIONAL LIMITATIONS, WOULD AFFECT
THE WESTERN BASIC PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVITY IN GENERAL,
AND IN PARTICULAR THE GERMAN COMPONENT IN THE NGA. WE,
THEREFORE, WHILE RECOGNIZING THE INGENUITY OF THE IDEA,
ASK THAT IT BE NOT FURTHER PERSUED. END TEXT.

2. COMMENT. WHEN ASKED IF HE HAD ANYTHING TO ADD TO
THE PAPER, RUECKRIEGEL STATED NO IT WAS BASICALLY SELF-
EXPLANATORY. HE DID ADD, HOWEVER, THAT HIS MAIN PERSONAL
OBJECTION TO THE IDEA WAS THE SHIFT FROM A US/USSR
EMPHASIS, TO ONE IN WHICH THE FRG RATHER THAN THE US
SIDE WOULD BE ON COMPARABLE FORCE LEVELS WITH THE
SOVIET UNION.
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